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September 25, 1990

MEMORANDUM TO: J. Howard Danson
Director
Mental Health Facilities Branch

FROM: Gail Waller
Policy/Program Analyst
Mental Health Facilities Branch

RE: Environmental Hypersensitivity

Per your request, here is an update of the status of the issue of Environmental Hypersensitivity in the psychiatric hospitals.

I met with the Medical Directors in July, and asked them to discuss the issue over the summer, with a view to formulating a position statement on dealing with possibly environmentally hypersensitive people in the psychiatric hospitals. I also gave them at that time, a thick package of information, mostly gathered at the April conference in Ottawa, concerning the disorder. We were at the time looking toward the September meeting to discuss a draft statement.

I spoke with Chris Brown several times over the summer, and I let him know that the Medical Directors were studying the information which I had given them, and that we would discuss it further at the September meeting. Although he did not like this approach, as he felt that there was nothing to discuss, he did agree to wait until September for an answer.

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A few days before the September meeting, he mentioned some additional reports from the ones that I had given the Medical Directors, and told me that it would be very important for the Medical Directors to see them and include them in their study. I told him that this would likely mean a delay in their statement until October, but he was anxious for them to read the reports before making a statement, and agreed to wait until then.

I then sent a memo to Dr. Draper telling him that the reports were coming from this office, and that they may wish to delay discussion of the issue they could read these reports. (The reports were sent at the end of last week, as they were out of print and had to be hand-photocopied.)

Chris Brown called on or about September 13, which was two days after the September meeting. He wanted to know what the Medical Directors' statement was. I reminded him that we had just obtained copies of the reports which he felt were important for the M.D.s to see, and that I had told him that it may be a further month before a statement was ready, and that he had agreed to wait. He was not pleased, and hung up at this point. Since Peter Finkle has also been talking to him on a regular basis, I called Peter to let him know that Chris Brown would likely be calling him. Peter called me back and told me that Chris did indeed call him, and that he would send me E-mail telling me what Chris had said, which he has not done so far.

In short, nothing has been finalized as the Medical Directors have quite a lot of information to go through. I will be calling Dr. Draper shortly to ensure that the item is on the agenda for the October meeting and that a finalization of the position statement will be discussed at that meeting.

Gail Waller